

From Sail to Steam: Bridging Oceans and Cultures

In this episode, we'll consider the significance of this unique park.

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park preserves our maritime roots, telling amazing stories and providing an authentic link between our past, our present, and our future. Most of the vessels in this park are more than a century old! From a San Francisco ferryboat to a Pacific Coast lumber schooner to a deepwater sailing ship, all of these vessels have contributed to the human history of San Francisco, of California, and of the world.

Ships built San Francisco, and the grand age of sail is still alive at Hyde Street Pier. Small sailing sloops, schooners, and a large square-rigged ship continue to shift with the currents of the sea. These vessels carried the food of life, such as California grain, Alaskan salmon, and Scotch whiskey. They also brought warmth and shelter in the form of British coal, Belgian cement, and Pacific Coast lumber. Perhaps more importantly, they carried people with new ideas, creating a blend of cultures and traditions that continue to make California what it is today. Whether built for pleasure or commerce, these sailing vessels still capture the freedom of sky and sea, connecting us with wildness, with the elemental, with our roots.

Life is change, and the age of sail evolved into the age of steam as the 19th century progressed. The mechanized efficiency of steam propelled commerce on land and at sea. Steam has powered the dependable tugboat *Hercules* for more than a century. Steam also drove the ferryboat *Eureka* across San Francisco Bay for 67 years, transporting millions of people and cars to their offices in San Francisco or to the open roads north of the Golden Gate. *Hercules* brought lumber to build the cities of California, and *Eureka* brought people together, building bridges between generations and cultures.

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park protects not only these steam and sailing vessels, but also maritime culture and craftsmanship. We hope these gifts from past generations will promote greater understanding and appreciation of the connection we all share with maritime history. May you enjoy your voyage. Fair Winds!